



For Immediate Release
June 25, 2004

Mowachaht / Muchalaht First Nations seek collaborative agreement with DFO on methods to reunite Tsu-xiit with his family

Mowachaht / Muchalaht Chiefs along with representatives from the Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit and Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council met today to discuss the future of Tsu-xiit.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) has agreed to a moratorium on capture efforts of Tsu-xiit (aka Luna, L-98) until a collaborative agreement can be reached with the Mowachaht / Muchalaht First Nations on methods to reunite Tsu-xiit with his family.

"We are concerned about public safety and the safety and well-being of Tsu-xiit, and will be working to develop protocols with DFO and the RCMP as well as a Marine Mammals protocol," said Mowachaht / Muchalaht Tyee Ha'wilth Mike Maquinna.

"DFO has agreed that no capture efforts will be made until such agreements can be finalized, and RCMP officials have agreed to work with Mowachaht / Muchalaht on improving communications and public safety," he said. "Mowachaht / Muchalaht will monitor Tsu-xiit in the interim, distracting him from interacting with boats in Nootka Sound."

Mowachaht / Muchalaht is also requesting an interim stewardship agreement be negotiated with DFO, and a plan for the culturally appropriate relocation of Tsu-xiit.

"We stand beside Mowachaht / Muchalaht in demanding DFO recognize their traditional territories and rights and title of all things that live within it," said Doug Kelly, a member First Nations Summit Political Executive.

"Mowachaht / Muchalaht Chiefs must be a part of any and all discussions regarding Tsu-xiit, or any other marine mammal or living creature within their hahoulthee (traditional territory)," said AFN Regional Vice-Chief Shawn Atleo. "National Chief Phil Fontaine and AFN Executive will follow up with the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and senior DFO officials to help find a resolution to this situation," he said.

- - 30 - -

For more information contact:

Mowachaht / Muchalaht Tyee Ha'wilth Mike Maquinna – (250) 283-2015

AFN BC Regional Chief Shawn Atleo – (604) 922-7733

Doug Kelly, member of the First Nations Summit Political Executive – (604) 317-7379